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United Nations Children's Fund support budget for the biennium 2006-2007

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the biennial support budget for 2006-2007 (E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1). During its consideration of the item, the Advisory Committee met with the Executive Director and other representatives, who provided additional information and clarification.

Format and presentation

2. The Advisory Committee welcomes the further refinements to the results-based presentation for UNICEF, as seen in the submission for the proposed biennial support budget for 2006-2007 (E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1). Paragraphs 14-20 of the budget document provide information on the progress achieved in results based management and budgeting by UNICEF. The Committee welcomes the close collaboration of UNICEF with other funds and programmes, as recommended by the Advisory Committee in its report on the biennial support budget for 2004-2005 (E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.15). The Committee notes, in the context of the harmonization of budget presentations with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), that common terminology, definitions, methodology, format and financial information are provided. Moreover, as indicated in paragraph 17 of the budget document, all three organizations "are working together to improve the presentation of results-based management and

* E/ICEF/2006/1.



results-based budgeting approaches with better overall linkage of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) to the support budget". In this connection, the Advisory Committee has recommended that the process of harmonization with other agencies with a view towards implementing results-based budgeting for the next biennium 2008-2009 be given high priority and provide further opportunity to improve the presentation. The Committee continues to expect that UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF will take into account lessons learned by other United Nations entities which have already implemented results-based budgeting; for example, the existing knowledge of the Department of Management and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations could be utilized while drawing up such comprehensive frameworks (see para. 5 of the Advisory Committee's report on the UNDP budget estimates for the biennium 2006-2007 (DP/2005/32)).

3. The Committee also notes the institutionalization of integrated results-orientated budget preparation and review mechanisms through country programme management plans for country offices and office management plans for regional and headquarters offices. As indicated in paragraph 19 of the Executive Director's report, all offices closely monitor programme implementation and the status of core management indicators, which are provided in their annual reports. These in turn are reviewed, consolidated and finally reported to the Executive Board on a global basis in the annual report of the Executive Director. In addition, progress on the targets attained in connection to key performance indicators of the 2006-2009 MTSP will also be reported in the same context.

4. The Committee notes that the proposed support budget for 2006-2007 is prepared within the framework of the annual report of the Executive Director on the results achieved against the MTSP for 2002-2005 (E/ICEF/2005/6) and the new MTSP for 2006-2009 (E/ICEF/2005/11). The objective of the 2006-2007 budget is to support the overall aim of the MTSP and the activities of the five focus areas identified therein: young child survival and development; basic education and gender equality; HIV/AIDS and children; child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse; and policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights. On the basis of an improved level of income and expenditure in 2004-2005, steady growth projections for 2006-2007 and increased projections of cost recovery from other resources, the following budget principles and organizational priorities have been adopted for 2006-2007 (para. 21, E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1):

- (a) Strengthening advocacy and leadership in the MTSP focus area;
- (b) Re-balancing office structures and staffing profiles for future needs and utilizing available resources to maximize results;
- (c) Enhancing efficiency and performance, and prioritizing funding requirements to optimize benefits from limited resources;
- (d) Making strategic investments to build capacities for the future.

Resources

5. The Committee notes that the 2006-2007 biennial support budget for UNICEF is presented in an overall environment of increasing resources (para. 21, E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1). Table 1 of document E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1 shows that for the biennium 2006-2007, total projected resources (including an opening balance of \$1,266.0 million) would amount to \$5,912.9 million, an increase of \$1,691.8 million

or 40 per cent as compared with total planned resources of \$4,221.1 million for the biennium 2004-2005. For 2006-2007, total regular resources are projected at \$2,014.0 million, a 23 per cent increase, as compared with planned total regular resources of \$1,640.2 million for 2004-2005. Other resources are projected at \$3,389.0 million for 2006-2007, as compared with an amount of \$2,292.0 million for 2004-2005 or 48 per cent higher, and total trust funds are projected at \$509.9 million, showing an increase of 76 per cent as compared with trust funds of \$288.9 million for 2004-2005.

6. Table 2 of the budget document shows the revised resource projections, as compared with those resources initially planned for 2004-2005. The Committee notes that the revised income estimate of \$4,259 million is 31 per cent higher than the planned amount for 2004-2005. Regular resources would increase 12 per cent from the \$1,414 million planned (adjusted by excluding the opening balance of \$226.0 million and adding the adjustment for taxes of \$15.8 million, as indicated in the footnote to table 2) to a revised projection of \$1,582 million. Other resources (excluding trust funds) would increase 46 per cent from the planned amount of \$1,833 million to a revised projection of \$2,677 million for 2004-2005 due to the Indian Ocean tsunami emergency. However, the Committee notes that for 2006-2007, for the purposes of planning and budgeting, regular resources income is projected to increase by 6 per cent over the revised figure for 2004-2005, and that the projected other resources income is estimated at 6 per cent lower than the revised figure for 2004-2005, taking into account the exceptional nature of the increase resulting from tsunami-related resources.

7. In terms of cumulative changes, from 2001-2002 to 2006-2007, UNICEF income is estimated to grow from \$2,349 million to \$4,198 million, reflecting increases of 52 per cent in regular resources and of 102 per cent in other resources (see figures B1 and B2).

8. The Committee also notes that the proportion of the support budget, as compared to the use of total resources, has been decreasing. Information provided in table 1 of the report, on the UNICEF resource plan (Use of resources — Programme and support activities), shows that for 2006-2007, the expenditure on programmes is projected at 83.2 per cent of total resources, with the support budget resources accounting for 16.2 per cent of the total; the remaining 0.6 per cent relates to security costs now shown as a separate appropriation (see para. 19 below). For 2004-2005, expenditure on programmes accounted for 80.9 per cent of total resources, with the support budget resources accounting for 19 per cent of the total.

9. The issue of the full costs of delivering programmes is one of long-standing concern to the Advisory Committee. It is important to have an idea of what is actually being delivered. In this regard, the Committee notes that in addition to support costs, there are programme costs, with the line between them often being vague and the latter including an element of support costs that is not always clearly disclosed. In this connection, the Committee was provided information, upon request, showing that the percentage of technical personnel and support costs, as a total of available programme funds for the country programmes, greatly varies among countries — from 17 to 53 per cent — depending upon the strategies, roles and inputs proposed. The Committee requests that renewed attention be given to clearly defining and fully disclosing these types of costs, in addition to continued effort to minimize costs of delivery.

10. As indicated by the Committee in its first report on the United Nations proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, in view of the continued increase in extrabudgetary resources and the expanding trend and emphasis on obtaining funding from the private sector, attention must be given to ensuring these resources are subject to a greater measure of scrutiny and control (see paras. 106-107, A/60/7).

II. Biennial support budget for 2006-2007

11. For 2006-2007, the biennial budget estimates funded under regular resources amount to \$746.8 million gross (\$556.8 million net), as compared to \$674.0 million gross (\$517.6 net) for 2004-2005. The gross proposed budget for 2006-2007 shows an increase of \$72.8 million, comprising a volume increase of \$7.5 million and a cost increase of \$65.3 million. The overall cost increase is mostly the result of the weakening of the United States dollar, inflation and post-related cost adjustments. The volume increase is the result of additional resources amounting to \$29.7 million, offset by a reduction of \$22.2 million of prior-year investment projects and operating costs in the field and at headquarters. The main areas of increase/decrease are discussed in the summary of proposals in paragraphs 42-45 and reflected in table 3 of the budget document.

12. Estimated income and adjustments to the 2006-2007 biennial support budget amount to \$190.0 million, including \$161.0 from recovery charges, as compared to estimated income to the 2004-2005 biennial support budget of \$156.4 million (including income from recovery charges of \$129.6 million). Recovery charges cover the costs for programme support and management and administration. The methodology used for recovery was approved by the Executive Board in June 2003 and updated in September 2004, with charges ranging from 12 to 5 per cent.

13. The key areas of increases are grouped under four main categories:

(a) **United Nations reform and MTSP priorities.** A total of \$10.1 million is provided in order to strengthen capacities related to the expansion of the UNICEF contribution to the reform efforts (see para. 15 below) and to implement the fifth focus area of the MTSP, particularly as regards leadership and advocacy in social policies impacting children (paras. 24-29, E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1);

(b) **Security, safety and emergencies.** A \$7.5 million cost increase in this area is to strengthen staff security both through centrally shared costs and direct costs at field locations (see para. 20 below). In addition, emergency planning and preparedness capacities are also to be strengthened in the regions, a rapid response team created at headquarters to provide minimal surge capacity, and the core positions in the UNICEF Operations Centre to be fully funded (paras. 30-33, E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1);

(c) **Human resources.** Emphasis will be given to competencies in key result areas of the MTSP, programme and operations management and emergencies. UNICEF will join the joint office of the ombudsperson serving the staff of UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) (see para. 17 below) and positions in headquarters managing stress counselling and HIV/AIDS, currently funded under other resources, will be regularized. The cost of these initiatives is estimated at \$4.1 million (paras. 34-37, E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1);

(d) **Strategic investments.** The total proposed cost for strategic investments in information technology (IT) amounts to \$7.9 million. Of this amount, proposed new projects total \$5.5 million, compared to \$19.4 million allocated for this purpose in 2004-2005 (see paras. 39-41 of the budget document and paras. 18-19 below).

14. The total number of posts proposed under the support budget for 2006-2007 is 2,797 (983 international Professionals, 263 national Professionals and 1,551 General Service and other categories of staff), as compared with the authorized staffing for 2004-2005 of 2,717 (930 international Professionals, 258 national Professionals and 1,529 General Service and other categories of staff). The proposed number of posts under the support budget for 2006-2007 would therefore increase by 80 posts (53 international Professionals, 5 national Professionals and 22 General Service and other categories of staff). Of this proposed increase, 41 posts are in the field while 39 are at headquarters, thus allocating 69.1 per cent of the total number of posts to the field and 30.0 per cent to headquarters.

15. The Committee notes that for the biennium 2006-2007, a vacancy rate of 6 per cent for international Professional posts is maintained, the exchange rate and post adjustment multiplier as of 1 September 2005 are used as a basis for the calculation of staff costs and the annual average inflation rate is projected at 3 per cent for headquarters and 4.5 per cent for the field (para. 45, E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1).

16. A summary of the proposed changes in regular resources post requirements is contained in table IV of the biennial budget document; table V provides the distribution of posts by source of funding. Upon enquiry, the Committee was further provided with an organigram showing an overview of the changes in regular resources posts which is included as an annex to the present report. The Committee recommends that such a format be included in the next submission, as is done by UNDP and UNFPA. The Committee was informed that four new posts are proposed at the Director level, following International Civil Service Commission classification standards and senior management's review: one D-2 level post for a Representative for Sudan, to be based in Khartoum, and a D-1 Director of Operations for South Sudan, mirroring the existing governance structure of one country with two systems of administration (para. 69); one D-1 level post for a Principal Adviser, to head a new unit focusing on United Nations reform, in line with the priorities indicated in paragraph 13 (a) above (see para. 100 and paras. 24-29 of E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1); and one D-1 level post for an Ombudsperson (ibid., para. 108). The Advisory Committee interposes no objection to the approval of these posts for the reasons given by the Executive Director.

17. In connection with the latter, the Committee notes that the current ombudsperson system is proposed to be strengthened with participation by UNICEF in the joint office of the Ombudsperson of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, at the request of UNICEF. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that on the basis of the anticipated workload — UNICEF having the largest number of staff globally — it has been agreed that UNICEF will provide one Associate Ombudsperson, one support staff person and two half-time consultants plus other related expenses at a yearly cost of \$450,000. The Committee welcomes this initiative which, as indicated, should provide an effective and harmonized mechanism for staff in all locations.

18. The Executive Director's proposals for IT requirements for the biennium 2006-2007 are addressed in paragraphs 112-116 of the budget document. The total

estimated distribution of IT requirements for 2006-2007 amounts to \$63.9 million, as compared to \$71.9 million for the current biennium. Requirements for production and recurrent maintenance for 2006-2007 would amount to \$58.6 million (including \$4 million for computer equipment outside New York), mostly reflecting the mainstreaming of the maintenance cost of investment projects approved for 2004-2005. As indicated in paragraph 13 (d) above, requirements for systems upgrade and major projects (non-recurrent) are projected at \$5.5 million for 2006-2007, compared to \$19.4 million allocated for this purpose in 2004-2005. Most of the new proposals are to sustain and further capitalize on earlier investments, to complete projects launched in the current biennium and continue building the organization's business continuity and disaster-recovery capacities (para. 40, E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.1). The Committee further notes that an amount of \$1 million is included to begin the learning management system and knowledge management and electronic archiving projects. The Committee was informed that additional funding would be sought from other sources for this purpose.

19. In view of the considerable expenditure that has been incurred on IT systems, the Committee expects to continue to see efficiency gains and savings related to both post and non-post resources.

III. Centrally shared security costs

20. In agreement with UNDP and UNFPA, the UNICEF portion of centrally shared security costs, previously included under the biennial support budget (programme support), are now shown as a separate appropriation for 2006-2007. The Committee notes that the costs for 2006-2007 are estimated at \$26,204,000, comprising United Nations field security costs, malicious act insurance policy and the global access control system, as broken down in table 7 of the budget document. An amount of \$27,900,000 was allocated for this purpose in 2004-2005. In this connection, paragraph 121 of the document indicates that of the total \$17 million additional allocation for security-related costs, UNICEF has committed a total of \$14.1 million as of October 2005; hence an uncommitted balance of \$2.9 million for any eventual related need. Any unspent funds will therefore revert to regular resources at the end of the biennium, in accordance with the UNICEF financial rules.

21. The Committee requested additional information regarding the total security costs of UNICEF for 2006-2007. The Committee was informed that in addition to the centrally shared costs of \$26.2 million mentioned above, the direct costs, or those incurred in field locations and charged against each office's support costs, are estimated at \$24.8 million for 2006-2007, as compared to \$29.6 million for 2004-2005.

IV. Establishment of a separation fund

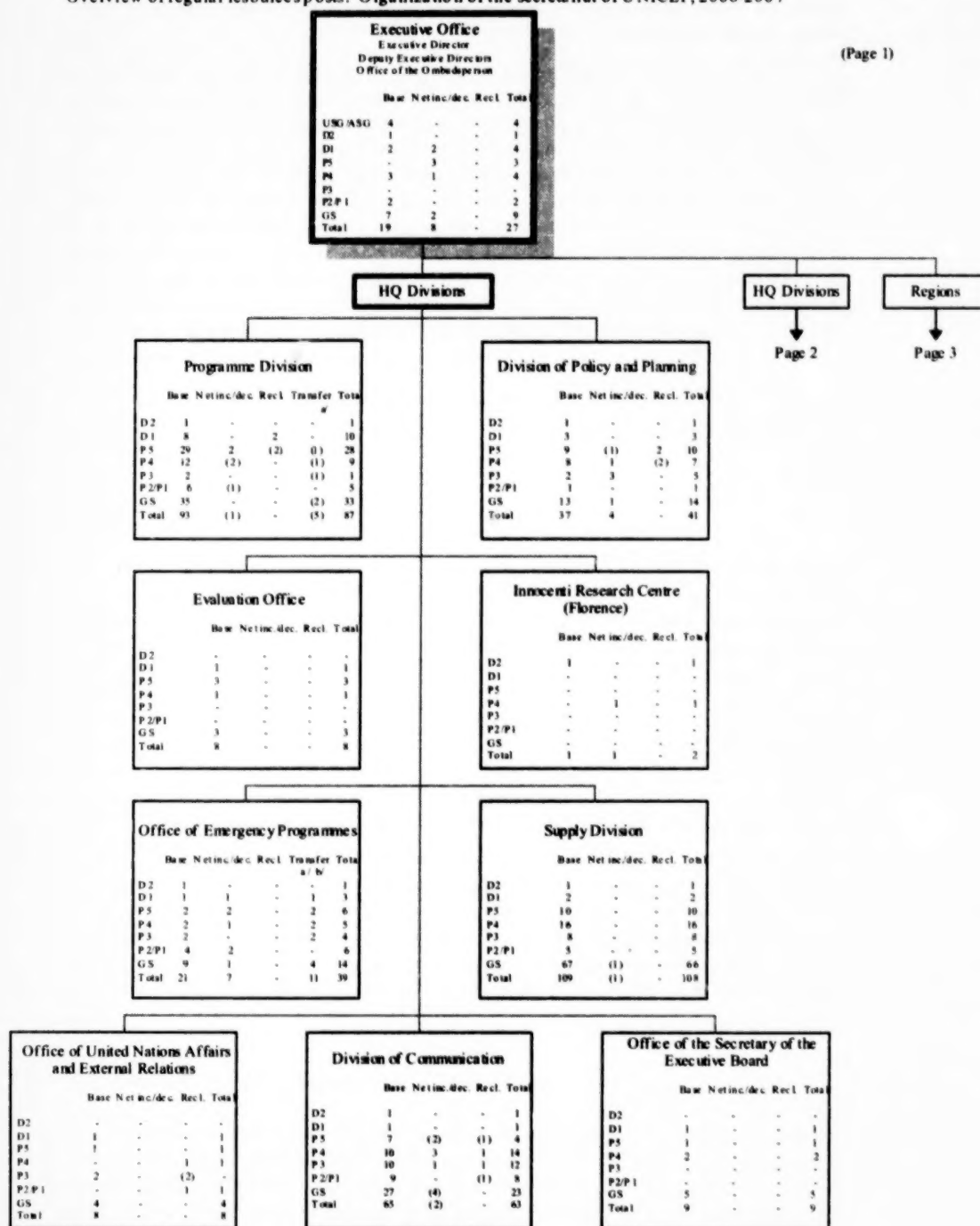
22. The Committee notes that at present, all staff separation-related costs and termination indemnities are paid from the last source of funding for the post at the time a staff member separates; such indemnities are incurred when a staff member with five or more years of service is terminated. As explained in paragraphs 123-124 of the budget document, this method of dealing with termination indemnities imposes uncertainty and a financial burden, particularly on small offices having to

cover these indemnities, and may lead to regular resources subsidization of costs related to other resources.

23. UNICEF is therefore proposing to establish a separation fund for staff funded from all resources to cover separation and termination liabilities through a replenishment method over a phased period. An initial start-up provision would be required to bridge the gap for upcoming payments due in 2006; thereafter, the fund would be built up on a monthly basis by a percentage charge of the net base salary of the staff at the time of payroll. These charges will be credited to the fund from where payments will be made as they become due, but the level of the charge is to be adjusted on the basis of analysis of the contingent liability in future. In order to start the fund, UNICEF is requesting an initial amount of \$10 million from the fund balance, on the basis of accrued liabilities. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Executive Board approve the request of the Executive Director.

Annex
Overview of regular resources posts: Organization of the secretariat of UNICEF, 2006-2007

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a/ Transfer of Humanitarian Response Unit from PD to EMOPS

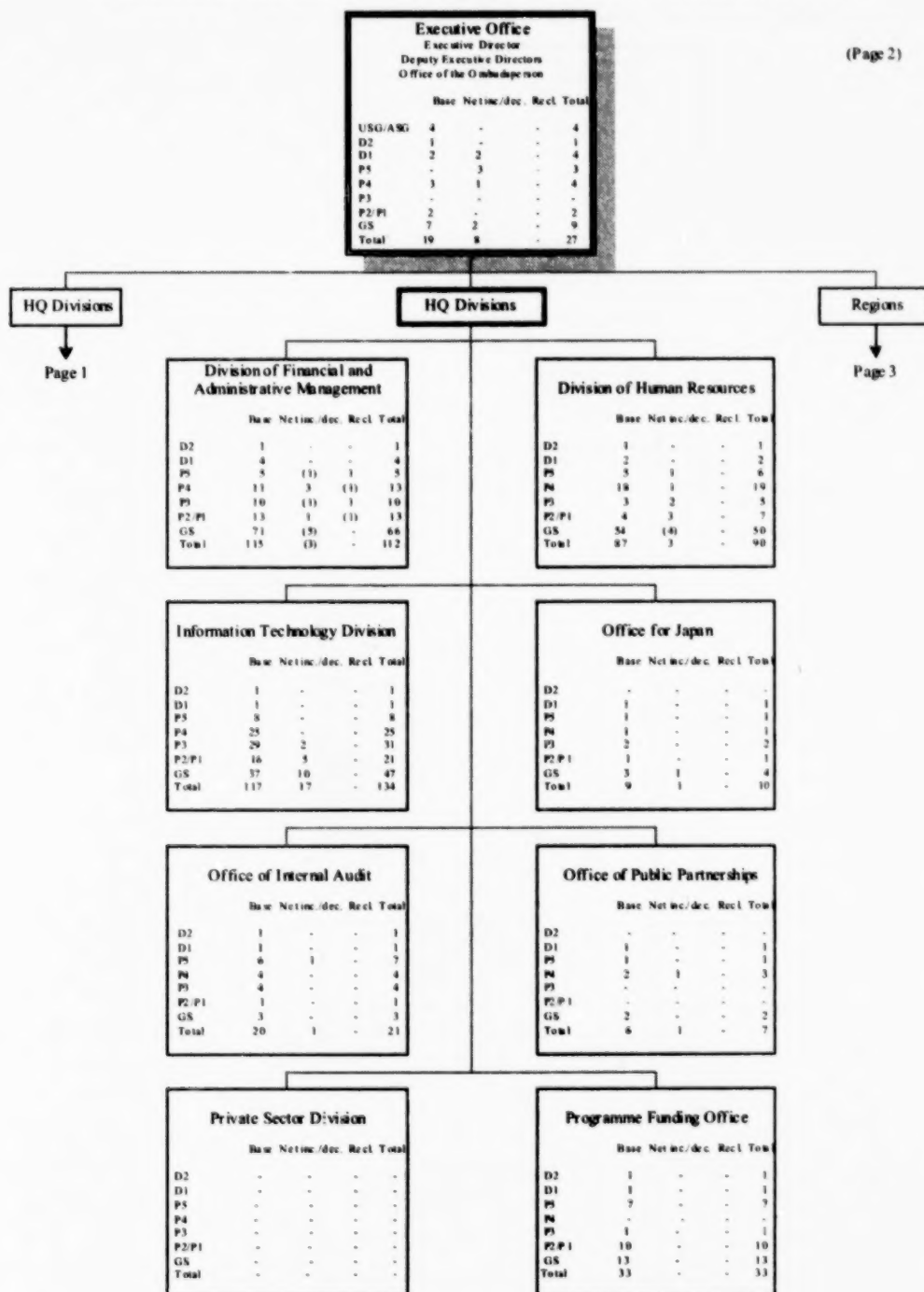
b/ Includes EMOPS, Geneva outposted staff previously shown as under Regional Office for Europe

dec. - decrease
 EMOPS - Office of Emergency Programmes
 inc. - increase
 PD - Programme Division
 Recl. - Reconciliation

Note: Chart includes support budget posts only.

Annex

Overview of regular resources posts: Organization of the secretariat of UNICEF, 2006-2007



Note: Chart includes support budget posts only.

Annex

Overview of regular resources posts: Organization of the secretariat of UNICEF, 2006-2007

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